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ABSTRACT

In 1961 the Southern Regional Education Board published the report of its Commission on Goals for Higher Education in the South. The regional goals articulted in 1961 by the SREB Commission on Goals have been studied in an effort to assess the degree to which they have been accomplished during the past 13 years. The rationale for assessing accomplishment has involved a survey questionnaire mailed to representative samples of five regional associations believed to have an active interest in regional development. The intent of the survey was to tap the informed opinions of faculty members in Southern colleges and universities who might have a special interest in regional progress in higher education. Analysis of these responses indicated that very few of the goals stated in 1961 are perceived as fully accomplished in 1974. Although the respondents were emphatic in their judgment of progress, they indicate that the majority of goals still remain viable for the Southern region. Many respondents would see the Southern region renew its efforts to cast out its double standard of the past, its traditional failure to embrace academic standards, and its lack of general academic excellence. (Author/PG)

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REGIONAL GOALS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

by
Cameron Fincher

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INTRODUCTION

In 1961 the Southern Regional Education Board published the report of its Commission on Goals for Higher Education in the South.[1] The report was a commendable statement of goals for the development of higher education in the Southern region. The Commission could boast of a prestigious membership and its statement of goals was an eloquent address to the needs and opportunities of higher education in the South. The goals stated were optimal but reasonable and decidedly within reach of the colleges and universities of the region.

Following the statement of goals was a valuable handbook of statistics[2] showing the gaps and deficiencies of Southern education. The educational disadvantages of the region were depicted in terms that required few apologies but a strong commitment from state government if the region's institutions were to move ahead in the sixties. In terms of financial support, student enrollments, physical facilities, faculty salaries, and academic programs the Southern region was clearly at a disadvantage. Meaningful indices of academic or institutional excellence were less obvious and decidedly more difficult to establish. Yet, the implication of the statistics was clear. The colleges and universities of the South did not offer the same educational opportunities as institutions in the Northeast or the Midwest. The challenge to state government, public leaders, and regional educators was to facilitate the growth and development of higher education, to provide the opportunities needed by the region, and to gain the advantages that the sixties were bringing.

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[1] Within Our Reach, Atlanta.

[2] Statistics for the Sixties, 1963.

In retrospect it is evident that the report of the Commission on Goals was issued at a time of considerable optimism. The early sixties provided a context of significant social, political, and cultural change for the Southern region that was unexcelled in other regions. For institutions of higher education it was a period of active ferment, soaring expectations, and hopeful promise. For educators and public leaders it once again made sense to speak of regional parity. The changing political scene, the encouraging economic outlook, and the hopeful possibilities of resolving its burdensome racial problems suggested a bright promise for the future. In the words of the Commission on Goals, the South was confronted with "opportunities that stir the imagination." The region had both the natural resources and human resources to achieve national eminence; it needed only the catalyst that higher education could provide. Science and technology were the keys to regional development, and higher education was the means of bringing science and technology to bear fully and fruitfully on the region's development. It was not a time to belabor the region's inadequacies or to set comparative goals of "merely trying to achieve a national average." It was a time for positive, constructive action.

Five broad goals with overriding importance were identified by the Commission. The leadership of the South was challenged to:

> provide every individual with opportunity for maximum development of his abilities;
>
> produce citizens responsive to the social, economic, and political needs of their time;
>
> achieve excellence in teaching, scholarship, and research;
>
> accelerate the economic progress of the Southern region through education and research; and

guide the region in solving social problems created by population changes, racial differences, urbanization, and technological growth.

The premise on which these goals were based was the belief that "everyone who can profit from a college education should have a chance to acquire it." With such rights and privileges came the responsibility of enlightened citizens to apply factual knowledge "imaginatively and creatively to the solution of problems." In developing such citizens the South should "cast away forever the traditional double standard" that compared Southern institutions only with each other; it should strive for excellence in whatever it undertook. The South stood to gain more than any other region from the technological revolution and needed only the right "partnership of Southern higher education, business, industry, and government." Because urban and industrial problems were new to the South, the intellectual resources of the region could be mustered to attack the problems before they became chronic. Both in the furtherance of economic development and the solution of social problems the universities had an essential role to play.

To accomplish these goals the Commission articulated 28 steps or objectives that they believed to be crucial to the South's progress in higher education. While recognizing the diversity of needs and conditions among the Southern states, the Commission achieved a commendable degree of specificity in stating what the Southern region should seek to accomplish. Seven of the goal statements were addressed primarily to state government while 15 were addressed to the colleges and universities within the region. The remaining five goals appeared to have been addressed to the public leadership in general. It is the accomplishment of the 28 goals or objectives that concern the efforts of this report.

PURPOSE AND RATIONALE

During the sixties the Southern states made remarkable progress in their efforts to provide educational opportunity to their college-age citizens. This progress is documented by the statistics of growth that denote larger enrollments, improved facilities, increased faculty salaries, larger libraries, better laboratories, more graduates, and larger amounts of funds expended. Each of these statistical indices, however, serves primarily to reflect quantities of inputs. They depict a dramatic tale of more money, larger numbers, and bigger facilities, but they do not reflect fully the improvement of the South's educational status or its accomplishment in qualitative indices of educational maturity. Like most statistics, they quantify the numerous changes that have taken place but they do not tell the complete story of what the changes mean.

The initial purpose of this study was to assess the degree to which the Southern region had accomplished the goals stated by the Commission thirteen years earlier. The curiosity stemmed from an interest in regional development and a desire to verify by other means what is implied by the changing statistics. Since the statistics, by their nature, are relative rather than absolute, it seemed appropriate to seek the informed opinions and beliefs of regional specialists who might well serve as critical observers of the changing scene. If the cooperation of such regional specialists could be obtained, it would make sense to ask quite directly how well the Southern region has achieved the goals set by the SREB Commission in the previous decade.

The rationale for the study, therefore, is uncomplicated. It is predicated on the simple belief that informed opinion is always valuable. The examination of opinions and beliefs concerning the accomplishment of regional goals could serve advantageously

to stimulate a more critical attitude on the part of educational leadership. If certain goals are believed by knowledgeable observers to be fully accomplished, this should be welcome news. If other goals are believed to remain unfulfilled, the information need not embarrass. It should stimulate renewed effort or at least a reexamination of the goal or objective as it pertains to today's circumstances. The degree of perceived accomplishment could become another comparative test for application to the separate statewide system, the individual institution, or the specific academic program.

Because many of the stated goals deal with factual or substantive events that might better be determined by statistical analysis, the rationale presented here will not appeal to everyone. A counter argument might be: if certain goals have been accomplished and if informed observers are unaware of the fact, then what does this tell us about the progress of higher education? If the informed observers were properly chosen, it would follow that their ignorance of educational progress should be meaningful information.

The specific purpose of this study, then, is to assess the opinions of regional specialists concerning the accomplishment of the regional goals stated in 1961 by the Commission on Goals for Higher Education in the South. The professional groups surveyed were chosen for their apparent interest in and their knowledge of the Southern region as a distinctive geographic or cultural area of the nation. The major assumption underlying the study was the belief that a meaningful assessment of regional goals could be obtained by seeking the informed judgment of professionals who could evaluate recent progress in terms of their own professional specialties. Such professionals should have both an expertise that is relevant to regional development and an interest in the growth or continued development of the Southern region. In brief, their opinions and beliefs concerning the progress of higher edu-

cation in the region should be more meaningful than the opinions of the general public.

The regional specialists chosen for inclusion in the study may be identified as professionals who are members of regional associations known to have relevant interests in regional matters. The associations include the:

Southern Economic Association

Southern Historical Association

Southern Political Science Association

Southern Sociological Society

Southern Society for Philosophy and Psychology.

Membership in the five associations includes six professional groups identified throughout the study as economists, historians, political scientists, sociologists, philosophers, and psychologists.

The reasons for selecting these five associations are quite direct. The regional or cultural distinctiveness of the South has traditionally lain in its economic, historical, political, and sociological peculiarities. Membership in such associations is believed to reflect an interest in a professional specialty as it pertains to regional matters. Although less clearly related to regional matters, membership in the Southern Society for Philosophy and Psychology was included out of an effort to broaden the range of informed observers. Faculty members teaching philosophy or psychology in Southern institutions might logically be considered as informed about educational matters. In other words, the prior probability of membership in the five associations being related to regional interests was regarded as quite high. The relevance of the six academic disciplines to the development of higher edu-

cation was easily assumed, and the possibility of tapping an intelligent, well-informed group of research subjects was especially promising.

SURVEY PROCEDURES

Participants in the survey were, for the most part, faculty members of institutions of higher education in the Southern states. Systematic samples were drawn from the membership of the regional associations for economists, historians, political scientists, and sociologists. Association members residing in states outside the South were excluded, as were those who obviously were not faculty members. For purposes of the survey the South was defined as inclusive of Missouri, Maryland, Delaware, and Oklahoma, but not Washington, D. C. The latter was excluded because of the rather large number of federal employees who are members of one or two of the associations.

With the exclusion of members who ostensibly were not faculty members of Southern institutions, the entire membership of the Southern Society for Philosophy and Psychology was included in the survey. Although the number of members is relatively small, the proportion identified as philosophers and the proportion identified as psychologists were compatible with the size of the samples drawn for economists, historians, political scientists, and sociologists. In brief, samples of 200 each were drawn from the associations for economists, historians, political scientists, and sociologists while a total of 156 psychologists and 150 philosophers were identified from the membership of the Southern Society for Philosophy and Psychology.

The questionnaire developed for use in the survey restated the 28 goals articulated by the Commission on Goals in 1961. Respondents were asked to consider each stated goal and then to indicate the degree to which that goal had been accomplished in the intervening years. The degrees of accomplishment ranged on a four-

point scale from "no genuine progress" through "moderate" and "substantial" to "fully accomplished." If the respondents indicated that a goal had not been fully accomplished, they were asked to indicate whether the goal remained viable for the Southern region.

As background data for the interpretation of possible group differences, respondents were asked to report: (1) age, (2) sex, (3) years residence in the South, and (4) institution from which their highest degree was earned. A concluding page of open-ended questions was provided in an effort to solicit the respondents' opinions concerning the overall progress that had been made in the past ten to fifteen years.

No effort was made to follow up the initial inquiry. The questionnaires were mailed with a covering letter stating the purpose of the survey and requesting the faculty member's cooperation. Distribution of the questionnaires was by first class mail, and a preaddressed, stamped envelope was included for the respondents' convenience. Under such circumstances a follow up in the form of a reminder or second questionnaire would not have been cost-effective. The success of the survey depended upon its specific appeal to professional groups with an interest in regional development and their willingness to cooperate in the study.

RETURNS AND RESULTS

The response to the survey instruments was both gratifying and disappointing. Out of a total of 1106 questionnaires mailed to participants, 362 were returned in one form or another. Twenty-six were returned by the postal service as having an insufficient address for delivery; five were returned with the explanation that the respondents did not have time to complete the questionnaire; and eight were returned with responses inappropriately marked.

Table 1. Biographical Data for Survey Respondents

	Political Scientists	Philosophers	Economists	Historians	Psychologists	Sociologists
AGE						
Mean	41.2	43.1	43.4	44.9	47.3	43.8
S.D.	12.2	10.0	12.8	12.7	8.5	9.4
Range	74-22	68-31	70-26	86-23	67-31	69-25
YEARS IN SOUTH						
Mean	23.9	25.8	27.5	33.4	29.1	20.5
S.D.	17.5	15.1	15.8	16.0	15.6	18.9
Range	74-1	60-2	65-2	86-2	65-5	65-2
SEX						
Male	47	39	53	54	31	40
Female	2	1	3	8	2	6
REGION*						
South	25	23	35	50	18	28
Northeast	12	14	6	5	7	6
Midwest	13	4	12	5	7	9
West	1	1	3	1	1	3
Foreign	1	3	0	1	0	0
Total	49	40	56	62	33	46

*Location of institution at which highest degree was earned

Commendable courtesy was shown by 34 respondents who explained why they felt incapable of answering the questionnaire. Each of these respondents was hesitant to generalize to the extent required by the questionnaire. Some believed themselves unprepared to generalize about the whole of higher education while others thought it impossible to generalize about a region as large and as diverse as the South. The former often stated that they had kept too closely to their own fields of specialization while the latter indicated that what was true of their own state or subregion should not be generalized to the entire region.

The total number of usable returns was 288, or 26 percent of those mailed. The rate of return was slightly higher for historians, economists, and philosophers, while the rate of return for sociologists and psychologists dropped below 25 percent. Lack of time, incorrect replies, insufficient knowledge, and insufficient addresses were randomly distributed among the six groups. In view of the survey procedures, the lower return for sociologists and psychologists may be understandable. The original sample of psychologists included many clinical psychologists whose regional interests might be minimal. Questionnaires to the sociologists were mailed somewhat late and may have been received too late in the academic year.

The age, sex, years residence in the South, and region in which highest degrees were earned by respondents are summarized in Table 1. As expected, the great majority of respondents are male, earned their highest degree in the South, have resided in the South at least half their lives, and average over 40 years of age. The ranges for both age and years residence are appreciable, however, and imply that both young faculty members and newcomers are included in the six groups. As befitting their long-standing interest in regional matters, the historians are somewhat older, have lived in the South somewhat longer, and earned their terminal degrees in the South to a greater extent than the other

professional groups. The higher mean age for psychologists is an exception that invites speculation.

How the data in Table 1 would compare with data for those who did not respond is, of course, debatable. There is reason to believe, nonetheless, from both the background data reported and the nature of the responses on the questionnaires that the survey did succeed in tapping a substantial group of professionals who are keenly interested in the regional development of the South. Marginal comments were frequent and quite helpful. Responses to the open-ended questions were particularly enlightening and reflect a genuine concern for the quality of higher education in the Southern region. Questionnaire data have been analyzed, therefore, as the informed opinions of a knowledgeable group of professionals interested in regional matters.

ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

The degree to which regional goals have been accomplished is indicated in Table 2 by the mean ratings assigned by the respondents. An analysis of variance was conducted for each goal but revealed a significant difference for the six groups only on five of the stated goals. As a result, the six groups have been combined for the purpose of reporting final results. The stated goals have been ranked according to the mean rating given by the combined groups. Following each stated goal is an index of the area of action to which the recommendation is addressed. For example, the first goal stated in Table 2 has been ranked first because the mean rating of 2.71 is the highest for the 28 items. Since the goal is addressed to state action, as opposed to institutional or regional action, the statement is followed by the symbol (S).

Also given in Table 2 is the percent of the combined groups responding that "no genuine progress has been made" toward that particular goal, and the percent

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Table 2. Regional Goals Ranked According to Mean Ratings of Accomplishment by the Combined Groups of Survey Respondents

Rank	Stated Goal	Mean Rating	Percent[1]	Percent[2]
1	Each state should make available a complete program of higher education, either in its own system or in cooperation with other states. (S)[3]	2.71	1	81
2	Each state should develop a strong system of two-year community colleges. (S)	2.67	5	64
3	Students should be admitted to institutions of higher learning solely on the basis of ability and character. (I)	2.37	14	74
4	In order to achieve the goals set in this report, we must enroll at least 1,700,000 students, or 39 percent of the college-age population, by 1970. This will cost $2,900,000,000 a year. (R)	2.31	15	36
5	Every Southern state should have a central agency for long-range planning and coordination of higher education. (S)	2.26	16	77
6	Colleges and universities should operate on a year-round basis. (I)	2.22	22	70
7	Every institution should secure fuller utilization of instructional space. (I)	2.15	16	81
8	Academic freedom must be preserved in every institution of higher learning in this region. (I)	2.14	20	90
9	Every institution should undertake a continuing program of institutional research and planning. This should be the principal duty of one or more persons on the staff. (I)	2.13	15	81

[1]Percent of respondents reporting "no genuine progress"

[2]Percent of respondents indicating that stated goal remains viable

[3]Indicates whether goal pertains to state action (S), institutional action (I), or region in general (R)

Table 2 (continued)

Rank	Stated Goal	Mean Rating	Percent[1]	Percent[2]
10	College and university libraries should be strengthened, and cooperation among them should be encouraged, with the aim of making them a single great regional resource. (R)	2.11	17	89
11	Increased emphasis should be placed upon improving counseling and guidance services in high schools and colleges. (S)	2.05	17	85
12	The Southern Regional Education Board should expand its consultant services to states and institutions on problems of higher education. (R)	2.00	19	68
13	Each state should develop a well-planned and coordinated program of adult education as an integral part of its system of higher education. (S)	1.99	23	90
15	The universities of the region must become creative, influential forces in the governmental, social and economic environment which surrounds them. As idea centers for social and economic development, they must take the lead in brining new progress to the South. (I)	1.98	24	84
15	Institutions must attract and develop faculties of the highest caliber. To do this, faculty salaries in the Southern states must be made competitive with those in the rest of the nation. (I)	1.98	24	90
15	Financial support for all institutions of higher learning must be increased substantially through more generous gifts and higher appropriations from local, state and federal governments. (S)	1.98	20	84

Table 2 (continued)

Rank	Stated Goal	Mean Rating	Percent[1]	Percent[2]
17.5	Each state should develop a comprehensive testing program in its high schools to identify talented students and encourage them to go to college. (S)	1.95	28	79
17.5	One or more universities in the region should establish a center for the study of higher education. (R)	1.89	28	80
19	All institutions of higher education in the region must devote more attention to the shifting manpower needs of our changing economy and develop better ways of meeting them. (R)	1.89	28	80
20	To instruct larger numbers of students with existing faculty, institutions must reduce the number of course offerings, experiment with class sizes and make full use of all modern technological aids in teaching. (I)	1.87	31	55
21.5	The organization of graduate schools should be based upon a core of administrators and faculty whose primary concern is graduate education. Requirements for graduate degrees should be more specific and more demanding. (I)	1.84	32	74
21.5	The region's colleges and universities must stimulate increased public understanding of their efforts and moral and financial support for their programs. (I)	1.84	32	87
23	To achieve excellence, institutions of higher learning and their supporters must practice self-restraint and determine to perform existing functions well before assuming new ones. (I)	1.79	35	78

Table 2 (continued)

Rank	Stated Goal	Mean Rating	Percent[1]	Percent[2]
24	Southern states should make maximum use of television for classroom instruction and home study. (S)	1.71	41	45
25	Institutions must strive for maximum efficiency in their administrative operations. (I)	1.66	44	85
26	To improve faculty supply, the three-year master's degree program for college teaching should be expanded. (I)	1.62	59	21
27	To improve student quality, colleges and universities should insist on better academic preparation by the secondary schools, try to attract superior students and demand superior performance from them. (I)	1.61	48	80
28	Liberal education must be restored to a place of prominence in the undergraduate curriculum. This means a strong program of required courses in the humanities, natural sciences and social sciences, taught in such a way as to stimulate individual thought. (I)	1.60	50	72

Note: F-ratios for goals ranked 5, 11, 20, 21.5, and 26 are significant at .05 level or higher

of the combined groups reporting that the stated goal remains viable for the Southern region. The five indices reported permit an interpretation of each stated goal in terms of how well the respondents thought the goal to be accomplished and whether they regard the goal as still viable. For example, the stated goal concerning a strong statewide system of two-year community colleges may be interpreted as one perceived by the respondents as reflecting substantial progress. Only five percent of the combined groups believe "no genuine progress" to be made; 64 percent believe the goal to remain viable for the Southern region.

Another example may be given from the lower ranks of stated goals. Ranked number 27 is the stated goal of better preparation by secondary schools and higher standards for colleges. The mean rating assigned by the combined groups is 1.61 which indicates that less than "moderate" progress has been made Forty-eight percent of the respondents believe that "no genuine progress" has been made in recent years, and 80 percent of the respondents agree that the need remains a viable goal for the region.

Ranked lowest by the respondents is the stated goal of restoring liberal education to a place of prominence. Fifty percent of the combined groups believe that "no genuine progress" has been made. Almost three out of four respondents believe the restoration to remain a viable goal but compared to the higher degree of agreement on other goals, this particular goal may not be as meaningful now as it was in the early sixties. The preservation of academic freedom, a well-planned program of adult education, and the attraction of faculty of the highest caliber appear to be more viable to the respondents.

A GENERAL INTERPRETATION

The most important finding of the survey may be the small number of regional goals perceived as fully

accomplished and the large number remaining viable 13 years later. Goals no longer perceived as viable by the respondents may be so not because they have been fully accomplished but because changing times and circumstances have altered the relevance of the goal.

Twenty-five of the original 28 stated goals are perceived by a majority of the respondents as still viable for the Southern region. The three goals not perceived as viable by a majority are those pertaining to the three-year master's degree program for college teaching, the maximum use of television for classroom instruction, and the increased enrollment of college-age population. Only the latter is verified by objective data on the matter. The total number of students enrolled in 1971 exceeded two million and constituted 46 percent of the college-age population of the Southern states. The cost of almost three billion dollars was exceeded even earlier.

The clearest rejection of a goal is that of the three-year master's program for college teaching, a matter that undoubtedly reflects the changing job market for graduates with the doctorate. Thirteen percent of the respondents did not judge the viability of maximum utilization of television but that goal also reflects the changed market for college teachers. Closely related but still perceived as viable by 55 percent of the combined groups is the stated goal of reducing course offerings, experimenting with class size, and making full use of technological aids. All other goals are regarded as viable by approximately two-thirds or more of the combined groups.

The respondents are most dubious that progress has been made in: (1) restoring liberal education to a place of prominence in the undergraduate curriculum, and (2) improving student performance through better academic preparation at the secondary level. Four out of five respondents believe the improvement of student

qualicy to remain a viable goal and 72 percent endorse the restoration of liberal education.

The greatest degree of accomplishment would appear to be in the development of complete programs of higher education for the various states. Only one percent of the respondents say that "no genuine progress" has been made while 81 percent believe the goal to remain viable. The proper interpretation of this finding may be that respondents believe progress to be substantial but recognize the need for further progress.

Other goals for which the mean rating of accomplishment is high are: (1) the development of statewide systems of two-year colleges, (2) admission to college on the basis of ability and character, and perhaps (3) the establishment of a central agency for long-range planning. Each of these goals has a mean rating of 2.25 or higher with only 16 percent or less reporting "no genuine progress."

Goals receiving a mean rating of 2.0 or higher include: (1) operation of colleges on a year-round basis, (2) fuller utilization of instructional space, (3) progress in preserving academic freedom, (4) continuing programs of institutional research, (5) the strengthening of libraries, (6) an increased emphasis on counseling and guidance, and (7) the expansion of consultant services by the Southern Regional Education Board. The variation of opinion on these goals, however, are greater than other goals. Twenty-two percent believe "no genuine progress" to be made on year-round operation of colleges, and 20 percent doubt that genuine progress has been made in the preservation of academic freedom.

Among the goals for which "moderate progress" is perceived by the respondents are those pertaining to: (1) well-planned programs of adult education, (2) the role of universities as creative, influential forces, (3) the attraction of faculties of the highest caliber,

(4) increased financial support, (5) comprehensive testing programs in secondary schools, (6) regional centers for the study of higher education, and (7) an adequate concern for shifting manpower needs. Each of these goals is believed to remain viable by at least 70 percent of the respondents. An appreciable proportion of the combined groups believes that "no genuine progress" has been made in establishing regional centers for the study of higher education, developing comprehensive testing programs for high school students, attending to regional manpower needs, and attracting faculty of the highest caliber.

The remaining goals are those that might well deserve the greater attention of educational leaders. The degree of accomplishment perceived by the respondents is less than "moderate" and the number of respondents indicating "no genuine progress" is quite appreciable. At least one-third of the combined groups believe "no genuine progress" to be made in: (1) the organization and development of graduate education, (2) public understanding of higher education, (3) the practice of self-restraint by institutions, (4) the achievement of maximum efficiency, (5) the improvement of student quality, and (6) the restoration of liberal education in the undergraduate curriculum. As mentioned previously, the lack of progress in the development of three-year master's degree programs for college teachers and the maximum use of television may be attributed in part to the changing job market for faculty members. Responses to these goals indicate considerable dissatisfaction with the progress made in the improvement of higher education from a qualitative standpoint. It is most doubtful that the respondents perceive a great deal of progress in the quality of graduate education and the overall quality of student performance. Such viewpoints strongly suggest that progress is evident in the growth indices of Southern education but not quite as prominent in indices of qualitative improvement.

Differing Opinions

As indicated, the six groups of professionals included in the survey did not differ significantly in their opinions of the progress made toward most of the stated goals. The five goals on which they did differ are: (1) statewide planning and coordination, (2) improved counseling and guidance, (3) increased public understanding and support, (4) experimentation with class size and full use of technological aids, and (5) the three-year master's degree program.

No consistent divisions among the six groups are detected in their responses, but the observed differences would seem clearly related to the different viewpoints that professional groups might bring to the judgment of progress. For example, the disagreement on counseling and guidance appears to be a disagreement in perspective on the part of psychologists and historians. The former report that progress in this particular area has been less than "moderate" while the historians report a more favorable view. Given the appreciable number of clinical psychologists in the original sample of psychologists, it is possible that they have taken a more critical view of counseling and guidance in the secondary schools and have reason to be more dissatisfied with the progress they see there.

The difference in opinion on the reduction of course offerings, experimentation with class size, and full use of technology is also a difference between psychologists and historians. The latter report that progress in this area has been at least "moderate" while the psychologists take a more pessimistic view of that progress. The four other professional groups are more comparable and fall somewhere between the psychologists and historians.

The establishment of a central agency for long-range planning and coordination is perceived by economists and political scientists as having progressed in

a fairly substantial manner while philosophers and sociologists regard the progress as only moderate. Psychologists and historians are in close agreement on this particular goal but take somewhat different viewpoints again on the improvement of public understanding and support. Historians and economists may be regarded as most optimistic about the improvement while the psychologists, philosophers, and political scientists perceive the progress somewhat pessimistically. With respect to the three-year master's degree program, the political scientists have not reported a substantial degree of progress but they apparently see better progress than the psychologists, sociologists, economists, and philosophers.

The gist of inter-group differences may be that some of the professional groups are better informed about progress in specific areas and report a more favorable or unfavorable view of that progress than their counterparts in other professions. Psychologists might naturally be more skeptical of progress in counseling and guidance while economists and political scientists might be in a better position to see the progress of statewide planning and coordination. A more accurate conclusion, however, is that inter-group differences among the six professional groups are not pronounced and do not suggest a high yield from further analysis. It is quite possible that neither the sample sizes nor the rating scale employed is sensitive enough to assess group differences. The combined group responses lend themselves more readily to statistical analysis and provide a better basis for judging the results of the survey.

Open Opinions

Responses to the open-ended questions of the survey questionnaire were particularly helpful in assessing the overall viewpoints of respondents. The great majority of the respondents gave a thoughtful, constructive answer to the questions and demonstrated,

in general, a positive attitude toward regional progress in higher education. Many of the respondents think the progress of the past ten to 15 years to be both substantial and encouraging. A very small minority is inclined to be overly critical or to suggest that progress was not all that it appears to be.

In suggesting goals yet to be accomplished the respondents reflect a continuing expectation that the Southern region will make further progress in the future. Most of the respondents are aware, however, of the difficulties involved in sustaining the South's economic and cultural growth. Their viewpoints are best described as critical but hopeful. By no means, would the viewpoints expressed be tossed aside as idealistic or utopian.

Many of the respondents underscore the reactions they have given to specific goals. The emphasis was clearly given that while substantial progress has been made in recent years, there was much progress yet to be made. A particular stress was placed upon the need to improve the quality of higher education in the South. This was done in numerous ways -- by pointing out that the South still did not have an institution of the caliber of Harvard or Berkeley; that the quality of undergraduate education still was not comparable to other regions; that libraries still needed strengthening; and that faculty salaries still were not competitive enough to attract top flight scientists and scholars. Others restated the continuing viability of specific goals that was stated by the SREB Commission.

Even a casual reading of the open-ended responses suggests that excellence is still a worthy goal in higher education. Some respondents deplore the decline of academic standards in recent years and the region's traditional failure to embrace academic standards of the highest quality. Many advocate the expansion of educational opportunity for minority groups and older students but do not believe that excellence should be

sacrificed in doing so. Some recommend direct, and perhaps drastic, action in the elimination of certain types of programs or institutions. Others suggest better coordination, a genuine concern with academic standards, and more serious attention to accreditation and its proper implications.

In many respects the responses run the gamut of recommendations that might be made for the improvement of higher education. Some respondents are concerned with preserving the quality of life in the Southern region while others believe more direct action on the part of state government to be essential. But for the most part, the responses reflect an awareness that the progress of the past few years has been uneven or irregular. Many respondents suggest that progress has not fully permeated higher education in the South and that numerous institutions and programs still have a long way to go. Some were quick to reject imitation as an adequate response and underlined the need for institutional autonomy and better academic planning. Others acknowledged the growth of physical plant and campus facilities but did not think the quality of academic programs had kept the pace. In brief, progress has been substantial and much in evidence, but progress has also been spotty. Certain subregions, institutions, programs, students, and faculties have not benefitted as much as others.

In general, the open-ended responses confirm the statistical analysis of responses to the stated goals. A careful reading suggests, nonetheless, that time and circumstances have changed since the early sixties. While most of the goals articulated by the SREB Commission remain viable for the seventies, other goals now command the attention of educational leadership. Numerous other goals and objectives are suggested by the respondents. Some are ill defined and others may be ill advised, but all suggest a continuing need to reexamine educational goals, to state them in plain English, and then to subject all to critical, intelligent discussion.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The regional goals articulated in 1961 by the SREB Commission on Goals have been studied in an effort to assess the degree to which they have been accomplished during the past 13 years. The rationale for assessing accomplishment has involved a survey questionnaire mailed to representative samples of five regional associations believed to have an active interest in regional development. Membership in the associations includes the six academic or professional specialties of political scientists, economists, historians, sociologists, psychologists, and philosophers.

The intent of the survey was to tap the informed opinions and beliefs of faculty members in Southern colleges and universities who might have a special interest in and a relevant knowledge of regional progress in higher education. The opinions of economists, historians, political scientists, and sociologists were thought to be particularly relevant because the regional distinctiveness of the South has traditionally been defined in terms of its economic, historical, social, and political peculiarities. The opinions of philosophers and psychologists were solicited because it was thought that they too might have a special interest in the regional progress of the South in higher education.

Survey respondents were asked to judge the degree to which each goal stated by the SREB Commission has been accomplished. If they thought the goal had not been fully accomplished they were asked whether the goal remained viable for the Southern region. Analysis of these responses indicated that very few of the goals stated in 1961 are perceived as fully accomplished in 1974. Although the respondents were emphatic in their judgment of progress, they indicate that the majority of goals still remain viable for the Southern region. In other words, the South has made commendable progress in its efforts to develop higher education but considerable progress is yet to be made.

Goals that remain viable are both those for which substantial progress is reported and those for which little or no progress is reported. For example, the Southern states are believed to have made substantial progress in their efforts to develop complete, statewide systems of higher education. Eighty-one percent of the respondents believe this progress should be continued in the future. At the other end, 50 percent of the respondents report "no genuine progress" in restoring the liberal arts to a place of prominence in the undergraduate curriculum. Yet, almost three out of four respondents believe this goal to remain viable for the South. There is a continued belief in the value of a liberal education and its relevance for college students in the South.

Irrespective of the progress made in recent years, respondents have indicated a strong belief in the viability of goals that facilitate well-planned programs of adult education, secure faculties of the highest caliber, preserve academic freedom, strengthen college and university libraries, produce maximum efficiency in administrative operations, increase public understanding and support -- both moral and financial -- and help the universities become creative, influential forces in the South's economic and cultural development. Respondents believe that progress is evident in the numerous indices of physical and economic growth but many have expressed reservations about the improvement of student performance, the identification and development of academic talent, and the overall intellectual elevation of the region's collegiate population. Excellence is still perceived as a worthy goal for the region. Many respondents would see the Southern region renew its efforts to cast out its double standard of the past, its traditional failure to embrace academic standards, and its lack of general academic excellence. Some reject the notion of a "Harvard-of-the-South" but others would like to see something at least more comparable to Berkeley.

In closing, it is well to acknowledge that this study deals only with reported opinions. The limitations to opinion surveys are well known and need not be belabored. It should be emphasized, however, that the informed opinions of historians, economists, political scientists, sociologists, philosophers, and psychologists are not irrelevant to the South's development as a regional or cultural area of the nation.

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